

THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF CENTRALITY

late Ottoman period



prewar period



late postwar period



global normalised intergration

THE LOCAL CENTRES TODAY



EXPLORING THE SPATIALITY OF LOCALITIES:

THE CASE OF CENTRAL ATHENS

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Objectives of the research

Based on both notions of 'centrality' and 'locality', the focus of this research is the study of 'local centres' within cities.

The research uses the case study of central Athens and is divided in two parts. Each part attempts to address the following questions:

- 1.) How have named localities emerged during the evolution of central Athens from the late Ottoman period until today and to what extent has their spatial evolution produced socio-spatial inequalities in Central Athens?
- 2.) To what extent does the interaction between spatial scales promote or hinder social interaction in local centres?

Methodology & Data

The research is strongly related to the field of urban design and adopts a mix of methods, from urban morphology, to geography and sociology. Space syntax analysis is centrally located in this research as an evidence-based approach for analysing spatial form across different spatial scales and for relating spatial form with social outcomes.

The first part of the research investigates the impact of the spatial evolution of localities on the formation of socio-spatial inequalities in central Athens. According to a threefold - historical, morphological

and functional - approach, local centres are firstly identified by their place names. Subsequently, four models of street network and their key urban elements are compared across four key time periods of the city's formation to detect the spatial changes in the evolution of central Athens. This is then related to the current socio-economic activity, revealing the mechanisms that created major differences in the landscape of the city centre of Athens.

At a closer scale of analysis, the second part of the research explores the effect of the interaction of spatial scales in enhancing or hindering sociability in local centres. Five case studies are chosen to represent the most typical categories of local centres. Methodologically, the spatial analysis of the street network and the built environment is compared with patterns of movement, patterns of uses and patterns of crime and illegal activities across three scales: the macro scale of the wider context, the meso scale of an area of 5min walk from the square and the micro scale of the area around the focal point.

Key findings

In the global context, the way that the city centre of Athens evolved has an impact on the formation of greater socio-spatial inequalities between different localities. The study suggests that the

current socio-spatial differentiations between localities are dependent on the transformation of the street network of the city, on the location of key urban elements of each period and on the evolution of centrality. Thus, the analysis of localities cannot be isolated from the city-wide context in which they have emerged, evolved and differentiated over periods of major transformation of the city centre.

In the local context, the research argues that there is an important interaction between scales and the ways urban problems arise. The interplay of spatial scales is important in analysing how form, structure and function influence movement and co-presence, the two most fundamental conditions for face-to-face interaction to occur. As a result, various spatial factors of the immediate local context can play different roles in enhancing or hindering social activity in local centres.

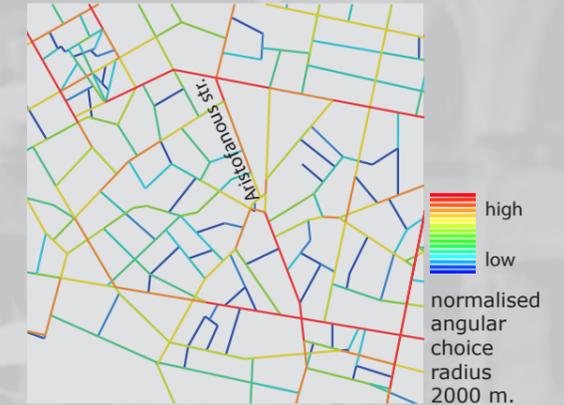
Conclusions

Overall, the understanding of localities cannot be separated either from its global context and its historical meaning or from its local environment. Suggestions to tackle urban problems in local centres should not neglect the greater dynamics of the city and should seriously consider the particular specificities of localities.

MULTI-SCALE ANALYSIS THE LOCAL CENTRE OF PSIRRIS

MACRO SCALE

the radial structure of Psirris and its accessible periphery



MESO SCALE

lack of co-present people in Aristorfanous street



MICRO SCALE

square of Psirris blocks the most visibly integrated field

